



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No. 04-113

September 14, 2004

NRC TESTIFIES ON NUCLEAR POWER PLANT SECURITY BEFORE CONGRESSIONAL SUBCOMMITTEE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has strengthened requirements of licensees at nuclear power plants, conducted vulnerability assessments and identified mitigation strategies in order to further improve security and evaluate potential threats, a top agency official said in testimony today before a House subcommittee.

Luis Reyes, the NRC's Executive Director for Operations, testified before the House Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations. He told lawmakers that even prior to the terrorist attacks, the agency had required nuclear plants to have security programs that included sophisticated surveillance equipment and armed response forces. These already robust security measures have since been supplemented with increased security patrols, additional security posts, increased vehicle standoff distances, improved coordination with law enforcement and other measures.

In addition, the NRC has completed an extensive set of vulnerability assessments and strengthened safety-related mitigation procedures and strategies for NRC-licensed activities involving radioactive materials and nuclear facilities. The NRC has also revamped its mock-attack program to test licensees' defense against new terrorist realities.

"Our vulnerability studies confirm that it would be difficult for even determined adversaries to both damage the reactor core and release radioactivity that would affect public health and safety. Further, the studies confirm that even in the unlikely event of a radiological release due to terrorist use of a large aircraft, NRC's emergency planning basis remains valid," Reyes stated.

The written testimony also includes details on:

- Specific security-related orders issued to nuclear power plants after Sept. 11, 2001;
- Collaboration between NRC, the Department of Homeland Security and other security officials to ensure an integrated response to threats;
- Vulnerability studies and the enhanced mock-attack exercise program;

- A comprehensive baseline inspection program to verify effectiveness of security measures and confirm compliance; and
- Revised standards for the release of security information to the public.

The written testimony will be available at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/congress-docs/congress-testimony/2004/>. For additional information on the enhancements to nuclear safety since 9/11, go to <http://www.nrc.gov>.

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